

February 23, 2017

Title: An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium ending June 30, 2019

Bill #: HB7027

Submitted by: Mary Emerling, RN, MPA, Middletown BOE School Health Supervisor in opposition to the cuts proposed to School Based Health Centers.

Dear CT Appropriations Committee,

The testimonies provided in the table below represent just a small portion of Middletown residents and Board of Education employees who have experienced the benefits of our School-Based Health Clinics either firsthand or through their work with students. The students enrolled in the clinics are provided with timely and professional services that accommodate the time and transportation constraints so many of our families deal with on a daily basis. And, the on-going communication between the SBHC staff and regular school nurses allow for continued care throughout the school year that reduces the risk of absenteeism and lost seat time in the classroom.

The return on investment is great in terms of establishing healthcare ideals (preventive services) at an early age which impact adult health over time, keeping our students healthy and on a path to graduation and productive adulthood, decreased lost days' work for parents, and decreased risk of loss of employment due to medical appointments and follow-up care.

Please consider the testimonies below as confirmation that the SBHCs in Middletown are not only a convenience but a necessity in providing the best chance for our children to thrive.

<i>Name and title: Nurse, teacher, parent, student, administrator</i>	<i>Your testimony:</i>
Mary Emerling, School Health Supervisor	The school-based health centers in Middletown, as they currently exist, have the potential to improve upon the lives of approximately 2,780 students <u>and</u> their families. The impact is huge when you include parents/siblings and other household members. SBHCs have become a vital partner in providing continuous health care for our students and allowing parents to engage in the health and well-being of their children. Because of our many working, single-parent households, our students and parents benefit from the services provided during the school day in terms of health care service for our children, and uninterrupted work days for parents which could otherwise negatively impact household income and employment. As partners to our school health programs, the staff has been open, and accommodating, to hearing about and meeting the needs of the students while respecting the obstacles some of our families face daily and district policies. The SBHC have become a very important part of the health care system in Middletown.
	I have worked with the School Based Health Center since 2001. They are an integral and important part of our school. Our SBHC allows our students (pre K- 5) to have access to a Nurse Practitioner every morning, full time social worker and dental cleanings and sealants. The Nurse practitioner sees children routinely and for sick visits sent to her by the school nurse. She evaluates, and treats; calls in prescriptions when needed. This saves my parents, who work or do not own a car , time and money. It avoids trips the the "emergency room" for routine visits. The Nurse Practitioner does physicals, flu shots and immunizations. She refers children, as needed for further work ups. Our social worker works with our students and our families. She is the link with the psychiatrist, and for mental health after care

Janet Parmelee RN-School Nurse	services. I can not express enough how important this team of practitioners is to our school.
Trevor Charles, Teacher	School Based Health centers have been a vital component of Middletown High's goal of providing for the mental, physical, and emotional health and support of our students. As a teacher, I know of countless students who rely on the Health Center for their physicals, for medical assistance when they feel ill, and even for counseling suggestions. As a three season coach, I push all of my athletes to be enrolled in the program so that they can participate in athletic programs, stay current with their physical needs, and get assessed by a medical professional quickly to determine whether or not they are fit to play or return to practice. The Health Center is an invaluable asset to our school community
Kate Parker, Teacher	I have parents of a special needs student who could not get their student to a doctor's office or a dentist. Because of this, the student did not have his vaccinations and parents reported "religious reasons" for not having the necessary vaccinations. The PA at CHC took time to come to me and discuss this. When I told her both parents were nurses, she knew something was "fishy". So she met with the parents and they admitted that they could not get him to a doctor's office and therefore could not access any health care for him. Through the efforts of myself, the CHC staff, and my para-professional staff, we were able to administer all necessary vaccines! To this day, he continues to go to the clinic and get his vaccines as well as having his teeth cleaned. Parents are thrilled!!!
Jennie Broomfield, School Psychologist	Having the CHC within the school has allowed my students access to health care that they would not have been able to access elsewhere. Some of our families do not have access to transportation and rely on the CHC for their students medical, counseling and dental services. Every year I promote enrollment in the CHC with the families that I work with so that we can help support their needs. I have had students able to participate in sports because they were able to get their sports physical completed there. I work with the School Based CHC counseling staff to provide wrap around services for our students. We have been able to work cooperatively to provide families outside resources such as in home behavioral supports, appointments with psychiatrists, as well as family therapy appointments within the school. The amount of support that the school based health center provides is immeasurable. Just last week one of our students was having difficulty breathing due to asthma. The student did not have their inhaler and was able to get a breathing treatment right here in school. The APRN and clinicians have been able to attend PPT meetings, 504 meetings and other student centered meetings to help plan health services accordingly at the school. Having the team on site allows us to collaborate more effectively.
	We are very fortunate, and grateful to have a SBHC at MHS. The level of advanced medical care that is provided to our enrolled students, within the comfort of the school community, allowing for minimal interruption to the school day, is truly exceptional. Whereas in the past, the School Nurse would have to dismiss a student to the ER for the evaluation of an ankle injury, we can now send the student next door to have the student assessed, diagnosed, treated, and returned to class within an hour. Going further, that student will have a note for school accommodations, and follow up care throughout the week to assess the recovery. Another example is a student with a sore throat who can now have a throat swab completed during a study hall period, receive a rapid diagnosis of Strep Throat, be dismissed, and have the antibiotic prescription called into the pharmacy, to pick up right away. One of the greatest advantages of our School Based Health Center is the ability to help new student registrants start school sooner. Students missing required physical exams and/or immunizations are able to schedule appointments within a day or two, rather than within a week or two if they had to make appointments at a primary care

Middletown High School Nurse's Office Staff	provider in the community. In addition, enrolled students have access to therapeutic mental health services, which has become increasingly urgent to our school population. Mobile dental services deserves special mention as well, since it offers countless students the opportunity to schedule in their periodic cleanings and fluoride treatments, without their parents missing work. The benefits of the School Based Health Center are endless!
Donna Marino, School District's Partnership Coordinator	Many students use our School Based Health Centers. This valuable resource for families helps children be in school and reduces absences by allowing medical visits during school hours. School Based Health Centers also provide students with counseling services which may not be accessible outside of the school. Many of our families have limited or no transportation so getting to a medical appointment presents challenges such as long bus rides or walking with a sick child in bad weather. Obstacles will keep children from getting well and sick visits and then keep children out of school and reduce time for learning.
Susan Meehl, Teacher	I can not say enough about how vital the School Based Health Center has been to me as a Mom of two boys who grew up using them and also as a teacher who has relied on them in times of need with students. As a Mom I knew that my boys were taken care of during sports related injuries, as well as being checked when ill once at school. The counseling was critical when their Dad was deployed in the military, as well as when their grandfather passed away. As a teacher I have referred my students to the services offered there so many times. I cannot imagine my students who can't get help outside of school, not having a safe place to get both physical and emotional help and support. Please keep our SBHC open.
Sheila Ritter, School Psychologist - Keigwin	The SBHC is a valuable resource to our students who need mental health services. If they were not located in the school, many students would likely not be able to access the counseling services they provide. A number of the students who receive counseling support at the SBHC are not eligible receive regular counseling as part of their school program because their needs do not impact their educational functioning. Additionally, the family work done by the SBHC is not a service that is typically provided by school staff.
Rosa Vargas, RN, BSN School Nurse- Middletown HS	As an RN, it is so awesome to be able to consult with, and learn from, our wonderful APRN at the Middletown High School School Based Health Center. APRN Karen Veith's expertise is invaluable to me on a daily basis, and she is just one door away!
Mark Fong Physical Education Keigwin and Head Wrestling Coach Middletown High School	The SBHC is an integral part of the MPS. They provide both physical and mental health care to students at no cost. They do so without interrupting the entire school day for the students. Most students will miss an entire school day for a doctor or dental appointment. With the SBHC they only miss one class. The SBHC also provides the required physicals students need to participate in athletics. I require all my athletes to join the SBHC. I cannot say enough about how valuable they are to our student body.
Meredith Walters, MHS teacher	Students have had more consistent access to health care needs and as a result have been able to spend more time in the classroom learning, and less time out sick. Offering a full service doctor's office right here in school also limits a family's need to take student out of school for various appointments, therefore maintaining student instruction as well as enabling a family to have uninterrupted work days.
David Mierzejewski, Assistant Principal, Woodrow Wilson	We love the SBHC at Woodrow Wilson. We have so many kids that need their services both physically and mentally. There are many families who need these services and the fact that students can be seen during the day is tremendous. I have had nothing but great experiences working with the SBHC. I only wish there were more counselors to go around as the needs seem to be on the uprise.
Rebecca Isaacson Middletown High School	As a teacher, I value the SBHC impact on instructional time. Students are able to get health and wellness appointments done as part of their school day. Many students

teacher, Middletown Public Schools Parent	who have appointments outside of school will often miss an entire day of instruction for one appointment. More instruction time equates to more learning. Additionally, many students who would otherwise not get health services are benefitting from routine health care services. As a parent, my children have been able to take advantage of these services. This not only keeps my children in school, but keeps me teaching in my classroom.
Denise Beaudry RN BSN Keigwin School Nurse	In my opinion, the SBHC is a tremendous asset to our school district. It is a win/win for everyone. The students get immediate advanced medical care when deemed necessary by the school nurse without having to go through the lengthy and time consuming process of calling parents, making doctor appts.resulting in students and parents leaving school and work. The behavioral health and dental care component is an added bonus and something many students do not have access to outside of school. And now with our using the SBHC for sports physicals that makes them even more invaluable.
Terry Duffy Former MHS Special Education Teacher, current TLC Para	SBHS does not only function as a health facility within the high school for the students and their family, but for and to the community. Yes it provides immeasurable services for physicals, dental care, psychiatric care, prescription care, and counseling, but ultimately, care for the “whole” student. Less absenteeism provides more instructional time, and more time in school provides learning on how to improve ones mind, body and soul. A healthy student allows for a happier student, who is provided the means to learn, grow and succeed.